



FEMA

News Release

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FEMA REGIONAL OFFICE PREPARES FOR 2011 STORM SEASON

May 22-28 is National Hurricane Awareness Week

PHILADELPHIA – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region III office is making preparations for an above-normal hurricane season, which officially begins on June 1 and runs through November 30. Region III's jurisdiction includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

Residents, particularly those in coastal areas, are urged to pay close attention to weather forecasts during hurricane season. While federal, state and local emergency officials are fully engaged in preparation for storms and flooding, FEMA strongly recommends individuals take ownership of their safety by preparing now during National Hurricane Awareness Week. Being prepared is everyone's responsibility.

"When hurricanes affect our area, they present regional challenges—evacuations, displaced populations, sustained winds, flooding, and power outages can affect all our states and jurisdictions," said MaryAnn Tierney, Regional Administrator for FEMA Region III. "Citizens and all levels of governments must prepare for this upcoming hurricane season."

If a storm is predicted to strike Region III, FEMA will do the following:

- Work in conjunction with state and local partners to pre-position life-saving and life-sustaining supplies within the mid-Atlantic region. Food, water, cots, blankets, and tarps will be pre-positioned to reach impacted areas as quickly as possible.
- Activate the 24-hour Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) to oversee the response effort and to monitor the needs of the impacted state. Federal agencies assigned to Emergency Support Functions will be activated to work in the RRCC to help fulfill requests for assistance. Through mission assignments, support can range from helicopters, generators and Disaster Medical Assistance Teams.
- Deploy personnel and teams, such as Liaison Officers and Incident Management Assistance Teams to facilitate operational planning between the regional office and state agencies.
- Place Preliminary Damage Assessment Teams on standby. These teams work jointly with state officials to conduct damage assessments that will determine eligibility for a presidential disaster declaration, which triggers the release of federal disaster funds.
- Place Mobile Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) on standby. DRCs are temporary facilities that provide on-site disaster assistance to victims, allowing them to register for temporary housing, grants and other aid.

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The Commodities Distribution Process

If there is a need to distribute commodities during a disaster, FEMA, state, and local agencies play key roles to ensure supplies reach those in need. While working towards similar goals, the role played by each level of government is different. As such, commodities are distributed in the following way:

State & Local Role

- When disaster survivors need supplies, local jurisdictions attempt to fill the need from existing resources. When unable, the requirements are forwarded to a county or state jurisdiction.
- Once a request is received, one option for the county or state is to work from existing or commercial resources to address the local need by signing an Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). EMAC is a cooperative agreement between states to facilitate the sharing of critical resources during emergencies and disasters.
- Should the county or state be unable to meet local needs, the state requests federal assistance.

Federal Role

- Once a state request is received, FEMA works to fulfill it. Supplies are delivered by FEMA to the state-designated staging area or Point of Distribution (POD) site.
- Supplies are distributed to disaster survivors at these sites by the state. The state identifies and operates these points of distribution.

Citizen Preparedness

Personal preparedness is critical. Individuals and families should be ready to take protective actions even before a storm is forecast.

FEMA wants the public to make sure it has provisions for **at least 72 hours** after a storm strikes. This includes food and water as well as other needed supplies, including a battery-powered radio to receive important response and recovery information should electricity service be interrupted.

In addition, if citizens are told by local officials to evacuate, they should do so without hesitating and should take copies of important papers with them including:

- checkbooks
- driver's license
- credit card information
- birth certificates
- social security cards
- other forms and documents proving ownership/identity

Everyone should know the local evacuation routes, and if available, the location of nearby safe shelters. Individuals and families need to have a communication plan in place in order to contact or find each other. As the storm approaches, residents should listen to and closely follow instructions from local and state authorities. For more information on preparing for disaster emergencies, please visit www.ready.gov/hurricanes and www.floodsmart.gov. Business owners and managers can learn how to prepare their businesses by visiting www.ready.gov/business.

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. Stay informed of

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